

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A system ~~System~~ for transmitting messages over a multimedia network from a sending client to a target client, the messages comprising target client information, the system comprising:

[[~~-~~]] a plurality of message gateways, each message gateway being configured to receive and transmit over at least one dedicated transfer medium, and

[[~~-~~]] a message broker (~~1~~) connected to the message gateways and being provided with a client database (~~2~~),

wherein a first message gateway receives a message in a first format from a sending client over a first transfer medium and transmits the message and/or an information extracted thereof to the message broker (~~1~~), the message broker (~~1~~) automatically selects an appropriate second transfer medium depending on the content of the client database (~~2~~) and supplied message and/or information extracted thereof, and the message is sent in a second format to the target client by means of a second message gateway configured for a transmission over the second transfer medium selected by the message broker (~~1~~), and

wherein messages include meta information containing a plurality of different fields, one of the fields being a secure read count and a maximum read count value limiting the maximum reads of the message,

wherein the message broker controls the message flow by inspecting the meta information of the messages.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The system ~~System~~ according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized by~~ a common internal message format is used for the communication respectively between the message broker (~~1~~) and the message gateways.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The system ~~System~~ according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the message gateways are distributed over the network.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The system ~~System~~ according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the transfer media comprise analog and digital transfer media.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The system ~~System~~ according to claim 1, further comprising: ~~characterized by~~  
at least one message processor (4) provided between the first and the second message gateway for further processing the content of the message to be transmitted.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The system ~~System~~ according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the client database (2) comprises addresses of clients, client preferences and/or characteristics of the transfer network to the corresponding target client.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The system ~~System~~ according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the message broker (1) is designed to furthermore perform processing control and/or security processing.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The system ~~System~~ according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the message broker (1) is designed to furthermore perform accounting and/or billing.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The system ~~System~~ according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ a plurality of message brokers (1, 1') is provided.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The system ~~System~~ according to claim 9, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ at least one message broker is (1') being connected with a client database ~~(2')~~ with reduced capacity.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The system ~~System~~ according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the messages respectively contain a non-granted encrypted and a granted non-encrypted part.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): A message ~~Message~~ broker unit for a distributed multimedia system, wherein the unit ~~characterized in that it~~ is designed to autonomously select an appropriate transfer medium out of a plurality of transfer media for messages received in a first format from a sending client and to be transferred to a target client in a second format, wherein the message broker (1) is connected to a client database (2) and the transfer medium selection is performed depending on target client information and the content of the client database (2),

wherein messages include meta information containing a plurality of different fields, one of the fields being a secure read count and a maximum read count value limiting the maximum reads of the message,

wherein the message broker controls the message flow by inspecting the meta information of the messages.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The message ~~Message~~ broker unit according to claim 12, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the transfer medium selection is performed depending on the target network, the message type and/or client preferences contained in the client database.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): The message ~~Message~~ broker according to claim 12, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the messages respectively contain a non-granted encrypted and a granted non-encrypted part.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): A method ~~Method~~ for sending messages over a multimedia network from a sending client to a target client, the messages comprising target client information, the method comprising the following steps:

[[ - ]] transmitting the message in a first format from the sending client to a message broker ~~(1)~~ over a first transfer medium, and

[[ - ]] transmitting the message in a second format to the target client over a second transfer medium, wherein the second transfer medium can be identical to the first transfer medium,

wherein the message broker ~~(1)~~ selects an appropriate second transfer medium out of a plurality of transfer media depending on the content of a client database ~~(2)~~ connected to the message broker ~~(1)~~ and the target client information,

wherein messages include meta information containing a plurality of different fields, one of the fields being a secure read count and a maximum read count value limiting the maximum reads of the message,

wherein the message broker controls the message flow by inspecting the meta information of the messages.

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 15, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the transmission of the message from the sending client to the target client is performed essentially in real-time.

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 15, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ a conversion from the first transfer medium to the second transfer medium is performed depending on the target network, the message type and/or client preferences contained in the client database (2).

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 15, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ before the transmission to the target client, the content of the message is further processed by digital signing, encryption, watermarking and/or language translation.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 15, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ a lifetime is attributed to each message and the message is only transmitted until the expiration of the lifetime.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): The method ~~Method~~ according to claim 15, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ the messages respectively contain a non-granted encrypted and a granted non-encrypted part.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): A software ~~Software~~ program product, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ when loaded into a computer, the product ~~[[it]]~~ implements a method according to claim 15.